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Where did DOE's money go?

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Missing money has led to an investigation by both the Guam Department of Education and Guam Police Department at Agueda Johnston Middle School. Money gone missing has led Senator Joe San Agustin to call for oversight.

"I get a WhatsApp and a text saying there's reason to believe that there could be some funds that may be missing," he recalled of his experience learning about the situation. San Agustin said the tip cited \$8,000 in missing cash from non-appropriated funds at the end of last school year. This is money raised by school officials, students and parents for school activities.

The alleged incident happened here at Agueda Johnston Middle School. According to superintendent Jon Fernandez it was forwarded to the DOE Internal Audit Office for further review and investigation. "We did identify the possibility of criminal misconduct and have reported that to GPD as well, so we're both approaching it from the standpoint of GPD getting involved to determine whether there is something that took place from a criminal nature, and working on the administrative side to complete the investigation and address as we would with any employee in any situation," he explained.

Issues with non-appropriated funds have plagued the department in the past. Most recently, an audit by the Office of Public Accountability found \$44,000 in under-reported NAF funding as well as untimely and inaccurate bank reconciliations at DOE. San Agustin said, "The first thing that crossed my mind is I remember that one time there was a question of non-appropriated funds missing at Simon Sanchez High School, and then another school when I was on the board of education."

San Agustin has called for a round table hearing to discuss DOE's internal processes, and whether or not additional safeguards should be taken. "I think over the past few years we've improved our oversight and management of NAF, it still is an issue, you have a very large school system and a lot of clubs and activities and funds being raised, but we're going to be there at the oversight to talk about what improvements have been made, how we can improve the oversight," he explained.

The roundtable is scheduled for July 20.



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